

Lesson # 3 --A Heavenly Description of Christ's People.

Introduction

- A. In the last lesson we were reminded that the Lord Jesus was almost always described in this book as related to His people.
- B. In this lesson we will find that the converse is also true. Who we are is based upon what it means to be related to Him. This does not deny the importance of creation, as a basis for self-understanding, in that redemption is a renewal of our original relationship.
- C. Due to the destructive effects of sin the human race has lost the understanding of self-worth. We have lost the knowledge of what it means to be a person created by God in His own image. Only as we see ourselves described in the Bible, and accept it, can we live in the freedom of the truth.

I. The Believer is the Object of Divine Love.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us Rev. 1:5

- A. The explanation of this description.
 - 1. A Biblical definition of love would include three areas.
 - a. Love means you recognize/respect another person as a person.
 - b. Love means you give that person rightful place in your life.
 - c. Love means you do what is right by that person.
 - 2. The believer is loved by Jesus Christ with infinite love.
 - a. He fully understands what it means for us to be a person.
 - b. He has made every provision so we may take our rightful place in His life and will.
 - c. He knows what we need and has the wisdom and power to bring it to pass.

B. The application of this description.

1. We must accept this declaration of divine love as an act of faith -- based on the Bible, not our emotions.
2. We must apply this declaration of divine love to all areas of our life -- in spite of trials and without testing God.
3. We must respond to this declaration of divine love by choosing to love Him -- and express that love in daily obedience.

II. The Believer has been Spiritually Cleansed.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Rev. 1:5

A. The explanation of this description.

1. The Bible reminds us that one effect of sin is moral defilement. It is used here as a symbol for all such effects.

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.
Isaiah 64:6

2. The Lord Jesus, in His death and resurrection, made it possible to be spiritually washed in the act of the new birth.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5

B. The application of this description.

1. We must accept this truth by faith, believe God, and not allow our emotions (feelings of uncleanness) to dictate to us.
2. We must apply this truth by faith.
 - a. Refuse all temptations to live a sensual, worldly, and self-centered life. James 4:4
 - b. Choose to obey God and thereby develop Biblical patterns of holiness through constantly renewing the mind. Eph. 4:22-32
 - c. Persevere in faith and obedience in spite of confusion, weakness, poor examples, and the attacks of Satan. I Cor. 10:13

III. The Believer has been made a Priest.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us kings (a kingdom of) priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory, and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Rev. 1:5,6

A. The explanation of this description.

1. The origin of our priesthood: "unto him that loved us"
2. The possibility of our priesthood: "washed us from our sins"
3. The appointment of our priesthood: "made us kings (a kingdom of) priests unto God"
4. The goal of our priesthood: "to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever"

Summary: It is overwhelming to realize that we have been given the office of the priesthood. Every believer has the right and the ability to speak to men for God and to speak to God for men. This is undoubtedly one of the most influential and powerful functions that a human can perform. We must also add -- and the most valuable.

B. The application of this description.

1. We must accept the privilege and responsibility of being a priest. We are such -- whether we know it or not.
2. We must learn to live the spiritual life that would be in harmony with such a high calling.
3. We must learn to put our gifts and abilities, as a priest, into practice.

Summary: A great deal of the weakness, confusion, and depression in the life of many believers is due to their failure to understand their calling. We cannot disobey God and then live a life of fruitfulness, joy, and spiritual growth.

IV. The Believer has been Individually Addressed.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not. I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death. Rev. 1:17,18

A. The explanation of this description.

1. We have been given a word revelation (truth).

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son Heb. 1:1,2

- a. The revelation of God is addressed to each of us.
- b. We do not have to guess about the basic truths of our relationship with God.

2. We have been given a living word.

It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63

- a. The Scripture is a living word and produces spiritual life.
- b. God's Word is His provision of a divine means of grace.

3. We have been given a final authority in the Word of God.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. I Thess. 2:13

- a. Only God can give final authority in spiritual matters.
- b. True spirituality is defined as submission to God's Word.

4. We have been given a basis for certainty in the Word of God.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy . . . For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. II Peter 1:19,21

- a. The integrity of any proposition is found in its author.
- b. God has given us His Word -- we can rest secure in its message.

B. The application of this description.

1. We must accept the truth that God has spoken to us.
2. We must believe the message of the Word of God.
3. We must respond to God by the submission of faith and love.
4. We must obey God through the Word which He has given to us.

V. The Believer has been made a Member of the Church.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. . . The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Rev. 1:13,20

A. The explanation of this description.

1. The word "candlestick" is better translated "lampstand." The reference is undoubtedly to the golden candlestick in the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:31-37), the ten golden candlesticks in Solomon's temple (I Kings 7:49), and the gold candlestick of Zechariah's vision (Zech. 4:2).
2. The truths related to the golden lampstands may be summarized into three areas.
 - a. The lampstands are symbolic of churches which in turn are composed of believers.
 - b. The reference to gold reminds us of royalty and value. The thought underlines the truth that all believers (churches) belong to Jesus Christ, and are His representatives.
 - c. The lampstand as a means of giving light points to the truth that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and has called each believer to be His light-bearer (John 8:12; Matt. 5:14-16).

B. The application of this description.

1. The believer is important to God and has been highly honored by being made a member of the church.
2. The believer has been given the privilege of representing the Lord Jesus in the world. We are His ambassadors (II Cor. 5:20).
3. We must accept these honors and privileges and learn to live in harmony with them.